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ABSTRACT

Conducted by the Council for Educational Development and Research, a national survey asked educators representing the nation's 8,889 small, rural school districts to indicate which of 40 items/issues facing rural, small schools needed improvement. The 4,364 respondents (827 school board presidents, 1,251 district superintendents, 1,283 principals, and 1,073 classroom teachers) agreed on only 4 issues: the importance of improving academic performance of students from low-income families; the need to improve students' thinking and reasoning skills; the task of recognizing/rewarding outstanding teachers; and the development of students' self-esteem and aspirations. Problems identified as least pressing were the availability of quality instructional materials, school/classroom atmosphere, and size and/or turnover of teachers and administrators. Those closest to the classroom exhibited greatest concern about the quality of rural, small schools. Concerns varied across regions of the country, with educators from southeastern states having many concerns about the quality of their schools. About a third of all respondents shared high concern for student mastery of basic academic skills as well as foreign languages and fine/performing arts. Nearly half of the teachers desired better on-the-job training, while 36% of board presidents didn't consider staff development to be in need of improvement. (NEC)

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BUILDING ON EXCELLENCE

Regional Priorities For the Improvement Of Rural, Small Schools

A Report to the National
Rural, Small Schools Task Force
By the Regional Educational Laboratories

September, 1987

Compiled by
Jane H. Arends, executive director
North Central Regional Educational Laboratory

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INTRODUCTION

Congress Directs Regional Laboratories To Identify and Support Rural, Small School Activities

Last year the U.S. Congress directed the nine regional educational laboratories to ". . . identify and support further development of promising, rural small-school activities and practices within their regions." The House and Senate appropriation committees provided the laboratories with $4 million to fund the initiative.

The laboratories enthusiastically accepted the congressional charge. They recognize that rural, small schools within their regions have all too often been left behind in the stampede to upgrade the quality of public education. This new initiative, the labs believe, will enable them to begin projects that will, over time, help rural, small schools better educate their students.

Before beginning, however, the laboratories wanted to take a snapshot of the rural, small school community. Rural scholars within the laboratories --in particular Paul Nachtigal-- cautioned that small, rural schools differ from their urban counterparts.

What's more, many already do an excellent job of educating their students. And although they may be small and rural, they're not insignificant: Together they enroll nearly 10 million youngsters.

Understanding the ethos of rural, small schools isn't enough, however. The labs knew they had to become better acquainted with the specific challenges facing such schools in their own regions, state by state. And the labs needed to understand national trends. Allocating $4 million across 50 states promises to grease but not repair the workings of rural education. Consequently, it became important for the labs to identify Rural America's chief educational concerns, as well as those that could be put aside until resources to address them become available. Finally, the labs agreed to work together to reduce duplication and to balloon their collective impact.

At that point the labs turned to CEDaR, their national association, and asked it to lend its resources and talent to the initiative.

As a first step, CEDaR established a National Rural, Small Schools Task Force and asked Robert Benton, Iowa's chief state school officer, to chair it. Then CEDaR asked the laboratories to nominate members of their own boards of directors to serve with him. Altogether, 18 educators and policymakers constitute the Task Force. They come from local and state school boards, classrooms, state departments of education, universities, state legislatures, and school district central offices.

The fact the Task Force members also serve on the laboratories' boards is significant. Congress, in creating this new initiative, specifically said that the funds ". . . shall be provided to the governing boards of the nine regional educational laboratories for the purpose of initiating . . . " this program. Congress didn't want the Department of Education

dictating what would be done in the various regions of the country; to the contrary, Congress wisely wanted educators, policymakers, and legislators with close ties to the schools, as well as policy-making authority over the labs, to call the shots.

The Rural, Small School Task Force immediately commissioned a survey of the targeted school districts. A national, random sample of 9,300 school board presidents, district superintendents, building principals, and classroom teachers was surveyed. They were asked to indicate which of 40 items and issues facing rural, small schools needed improvement.

The survey generated an enthusiastic response. The initial mailing generated 2,445 replies . . . about a 26 percent return, an impressive percentage for this kind of survey. And the American College Testing Program of Iowa City, Iowa, which assisted with the survey, prepared two follow-up mailings. The final number of replies totaled 4,364, which constitutes a 50% return rate.

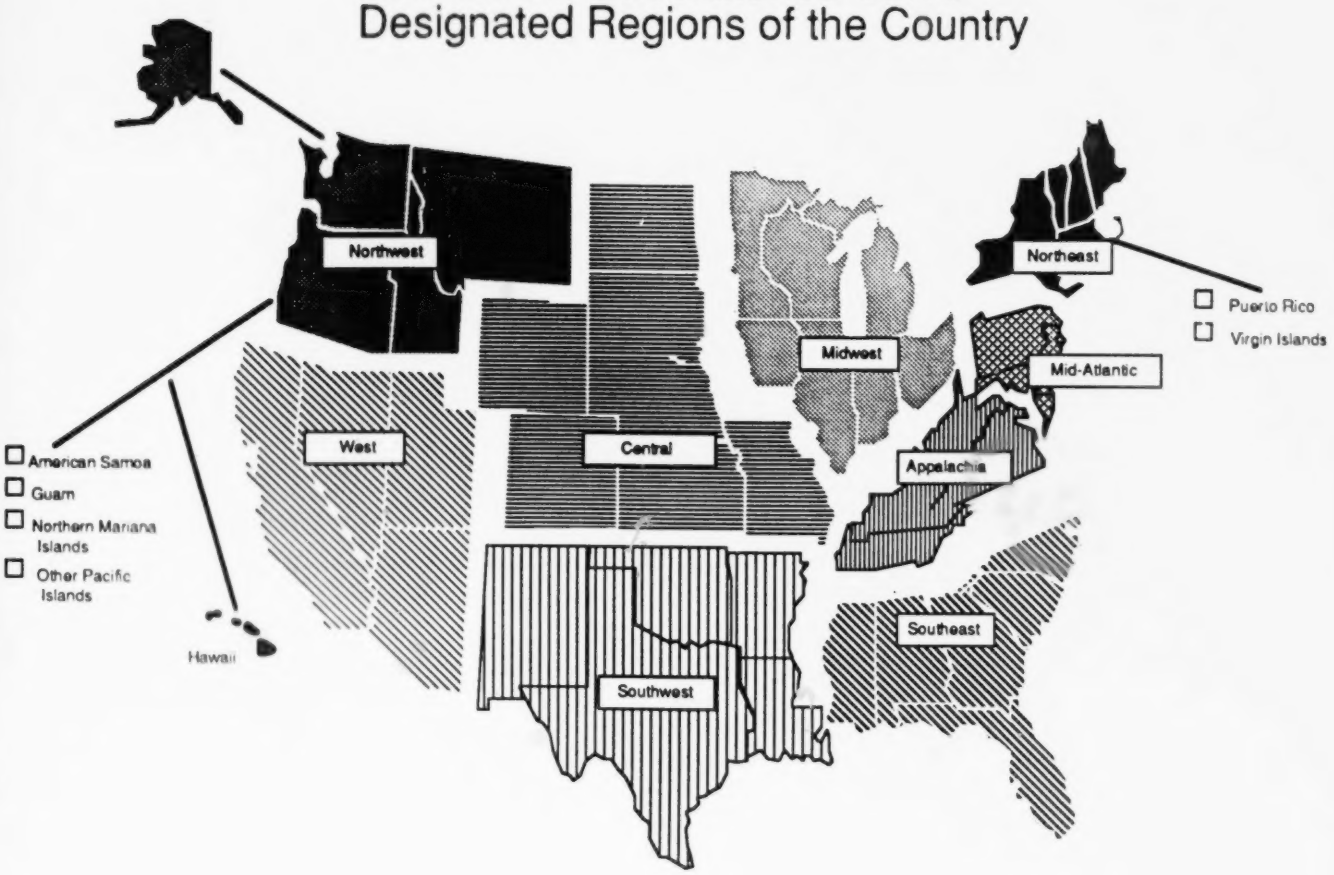
Jane Arends of the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, assisted by Jerry Kirkpatrick of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, compiled the returns and produced this report to the Task Force.

The data in this report will help the Task Force understand the needs and concerns of the rural, small school community. This information complements the views on the same subject offered earlier in a Washington-based forum sponsored by the Task Force. In that session over 30 representatives of rural and national associations appeared before the Task Force for face-to-face discussions about the strengths and weaknesses of rural, small schools.

Armed with data, opinions, and personal experiences, the Task Force will advise the laboratories on their individual programs. The laboratories will then begin to work with rural, small communities by the start of school this Fall. The Council and its membership appreciate Congress' interest in rural, small schools. And CEDaR is particularly proud that Congress saw fit to demonstrate its interest by directing the regional laboratories to conceive and operate this initiative. The laboratories, with the advice and counsel of the National Rural, Small Schools Task Force, intend to make this program a hallmark of their 20-year commitment to educational improvement.

E. Joseph Schneider

Educational Laboratories Serve Designated Regions of the Country



APPALACHIA	Appalachia Educational Laboratory Charleston, West Virginia
CENTRAL	Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory Aurora, Colorado
MID-ATLANTIC	Research for Better Schools Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
MIDWEST	North Central Regional Educational Laboratory Elmhurst, Illinois
NORTHEAST	Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement for the Northeast and Islands Andover, Massachusetts
NORTHWEST	Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory Portland, Oregon
SOUTHEAST	Southeastern Regional Improvement Laboratory Research Triangle Park, North Carolina
SOUTHWEST	Southwest Educational Development Laboratory Austin, Texas
WESTERN	Far West Laboratory San Francisco, California

RURAL CONCERNS

Rural Educators Primarily Concerned About Students' Thinking and Reasoning Skills, Overall Performance of Children from Low-Income Families

Educators from Rural America say there's a great need to improve the academic performance of their students from low-income families. The concern for this group of students is matched only by the educators worry that many of their pupils are not mastering a critical set of skills they'll need to succeed in life.

School board presidents, district superintendents, building principals, and classroom teachers expressed their views about rural, small schools in a national survey sponsored by the nine regional educational laboratories. These independent research and development institutions are regionally governed, but funded largely by the U.S. Department of Education.

The laboratories randomly surveyed 9,300 members of the four target groups in roughly equal numbers nationwide from communities defined as rural and small by the 1980 Census. Roughly 50 percent of those who received the survey responded.

Across the country, and all four respondent groups, two concerns rise above all others. And the closer the respondents work with the students, the greater the alarm.

That is, 67 percent of building principals and 65 percent of teachers say the academic performance of children from low-income families is either in "great need" or "fairly strong need" of improvement. Nearly identical percentages rank students' "thinking and reasoning" skills as in stong need of improvement. Roughly half of the school board presidents and district superintendents also rank these two items as their top concerns.

The need to develop a system that recognizes and rewards outstanding teachers emerges as the distant-third highest concern among all four respondent groups.

The survey asked the respondents to consider 40 items or issues facing their rural, small schools. Then the respondents were asked to indicate whether or not the item or issue was in (1) great need; (2) fairly strong need; (3) moderate need; (4) little need; or (5) no need "for improvement."

By eliminating the "moderate need" category and collapsing together the top two and the bottom two responses, "high" and "low" concern items emerge.

Using this scheme, the survey identifies 15 issues that *at least one-third of the total respondents* feel are of high concern:

ITEMS IDENTIFIED AS HIGH CONCERNS

Issue	Percentage of All Respondents Identifying It As a High Concern
Academic Performance of Students From Low-Income Families	62
Students' Thinking and Reasoning Skills	61
System to Reward or Recognize Outstanding Teachers	47
Development of Students' Self-Esteem and Aspirations	43
Academic Performance in Science	39
Academic Performance of Secondary Students	38
Academic Performance in Reading Comprehension	38
Extent of Community and Parent Involvement	37
Academic Performance in Mathematics	37
Availability of Community Support for Quality Education	36
Level of Expectation for Student Academic Performance	36
Quality of Inservice Programs for Staff	35
Academic Performance in Foreign Languages	35
Student Performance in Fine/Performing Arts	35
Academic Performance in Language Arts	35

An analysis of the data suggests several conclusions:

- Those closest to the classroom exhibit the greatest concern about the quality of rural, small schools. Teachers and principals tend to express the same concerns. District superintendents have fewer concerns; school board presidents have fewer yet.

- Concerns vary across regions of the country. Generally speaking, educators and board presidents from the Southeastern United States, running from Virginia through Florida and across to Mississippi, have a great many concerns about the quality of their rural, small schools. Respondents from the Midwestern, Central, and Northwestern states stand in sharp contrast.

- Some concerns are regional in nature. The best example is the overall academic performance of students with limited English proficiency. Not surprising, this concern surfaces throughout the Southwest and the State of Florida. But it's not a particularly significant concern in the Northeast or Northwest.

- When talking about students, respondents from throughout the United States say they are primarily concerned about children from low-income homes.

- By and large, the educators and board presidents are somewhat more concerned about the academic achievement of their high school students than the youngsters in elementary schools.

- The respondents express considerable concern about their students' ability to think and reason clearly, two skills increasingly

considered to be essential for life-long success. Similarly, these educators and policymakers want to see their students develop greater self-esteem and aspirations.

- About a third of all respondents share a high concern for their students' mastery of basic academic skills: reading, math, language arts, and science, as well as foreign languages and fine/performing arts.

- Other than their concern for students, the respondents are particularly concerned about how they might do a better job of recognizing and rewarding outstanding teachers.

- Somewhat surprisingly, the respondents also say small, rural schools need to improve parent and community involvement. Traditionally, these educators pride themselves on parent and community involvement that translates into support for their schools. Perhaps this tradition is eroding as Rural America accommodates to new economic realities.

- Nearly half of the teachers say they need better on-the-job training. Much has been written about the isolation of rural, small school teachers and the difficulty they have in obtaining quality staff development. Isolation is only one problem, however. The survey also reveals that only 30 percent of the school board presidents, the people who must come up with funds for such activities, share the teachers' concern. Worse yet, 36 percent of the board presidents don't consider staff development to be in need of improvement.

RURAL STRENGTHS

Educators, Board Presidents Generally Satisfied With Quality of Instructional Materials, Student Behavior, and School Facilities

Rural, small schools have their problems. And those teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board presidents who completed the survey are not hesitant to point out areas that need improvement. But the respondents also identify some obvious strengths of these schools.

The survey identifies 7 items or issues that *nearly half of all respondents* say require little or no improvement.

Other items or issues that don't seem to need immediate attention include: a system to reward and recognize outstanding students (42 percent); student performance in health and physical education (40 percent); coordination of instruction with student services (36 percent); and availability of teachers for selected subjects (37 percent).

ISSUES THAT REQUIRE LITTLE OR NO IMPROVEMENT

Issue	Percentage of Respondents Identifying It As a Low Concern
Size and/or Turnover of the Teaching and Administrative Staff	58
Availability of Quality Instructional Materials	54
School/Classroom Atmosphere or Climate	50
Use of School Time for Instruction and Student Learning	47
Students' Attendance	46
Availability of Adequate Teaching/ Learning Facilities	43
Students' Behavior	42

Overall, the data on rural, small school strengths seem to suggest several conclusions:

- Respondents are concerned about how they might better recognize and reward outstanding teachers. That would suggest that rural, small schools may be suffering because of their inability to pay higher salaries and offer other incentives to their better teachers. And yet 58 percent of all respondents say they feel little need to worry about teacher turnover.

- One of the reasons for the low concern for teacher and administrator turnover may be what educators refer to as school or classroom "climate." An important variable in that equation is the students themselves. Nearly half of the respondents say there is little need to improve student behavior. Nearly as many respondents say student attendance isn't a problem.

- As remarkable, there's an overall high acceptance of the quality of the instructional materials available to the teachers. And nearly half the respondents say their teaching facilities (buildings and classrooms) are adequate. Working in a rural, small school may not be as financially rewarding as teaching in urban settings, but the working conditions apparently have a lot to offer.

- Not too surprisingly, regional differences crop up when we sort out what's apparently working in rural, small schools. The Southeastern states have most of the concerns, as mentioned earlier. Respondents from this region are also more negative about their situation than are their colleagues from other regions. While 54 percent of all respondents say there is no need to improve the availability of quality instructional materials, only a third of the respondents from the Southeast agree. In fact, about 29 percent of them say there is a *great need* to improve these materials.

- Differences exist among the four respondent groups, too. School board presidents and superintendents are less likely than principals and teachers to find fault with their educational system. This pattern holds when we look at what's good about their schools. Most of the school board presidents, for example, see no need to

improve the adequacy of teaching and learning facilities. Not too surprisingly, those who actually have to work in those facilities --principals and teachers-- are less likely to share this view.

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Southern, Appalachian Rural, Small Schools In Greatest Need Of Serious Improvement

Rural, small school educators and school board presidents in the Southeast are concerned, seriously concerned, about the need to improve their schools.

The Southeastern states (Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, North Carolina, and South Carolina) express greater concern than any other region of the country on 21 of the 40 items surveyed. The region ties for first place in two other categories. And it comes in second in eight others.

To make matters worse, other regions are able to produce a mixture of low and high concerns. That's to say most regions can find something to crow about. Not so in the Southeast.

For example, nearly half of all respondents express little concern about students' behavior and school attendance. The Southeast is the exception. Only 26 percent from the Southeast agree student behavior isn't a problem. More significantly, 34 percent say it is.

The same picture emerges when concern is expressed about students' attendance. Only 31 percent of Southeastern respondents say it isn't a serious problem; 30 percent, on the other hand, took just the opposite stance.

The Southeast is particularly concerned about the quality of education being provided children from poor families. Eighty percent of respondents from the Southeast identify this as an area in need of major improvement.

In addition, at least half of the Southeastern respondents say there is serious need to improve: academic performance of students in secondary schools (57 percent); academic performance in reading (58 percent), language arts (49 percent), math (58 percent), and science (56 percent); students' thinking/reasoning skills (78 percent); students' self-esteem (54 percent); community and parent involvement (48 percent); and the way outstanding teachers are rewarded and recognized (51 percent).

The only thing the Southeastern respondents are not really all that worried about is the turnover among their administrators and teachers (49 percent).

The region just north isn't a whole lot better off. The Appalachian states (Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Virginia) mirror most of the concerns expressed by their Southern colleagues.

Seventy-five percent of the Appalachian respondents say there's a major need to improve the overall academic performance of students from low-income families.

Judging from the concerns expressed, the Appalachian and Southeastern regions share the bulk of serious problems confronting rural, small schools. To an extent that far exceeds respondents from other regions, the Southeastern and Appalachian educators not only cite more problems, but the problems they point to are in greater need of attention.

At least 50 percent of the respondents in either or both of the two regions express the view that considerable need exists to improve the following:

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED IN SOUTHEAST, APPALACHIA REGIONS

Issue	Southeast	Appalachia
Academic Performance of Children from Low Income Families	80	75
Students' Thinking and Reasoning Skills	78	73
Academic Performance of High School Students	57	51
Academic Performance in:		
Reading	58	54
Language Arts	49	46
Mathematics	58	45
Science	56	53
Social Studies	44	42
Students' Self-Esteem	54	50
Community and Parent Involvement	48	45
System to Reward and Recognize Outstanding Teachers	51	50

By contrast, respondents from the other seven regions are far less concerned about the need to make many improvements in their rural, small schools. This is particularly true for respondents from the Midwest, Central, and Northwestern regions.

The seven other regions together identify only six issues that nudge at least half of the respondents from any of the regions into agreeing they need to be improved.

ISSUES THAT NEED STRONG IMPROVEMENT IN OTHER REGIONS

Issue	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS						
	West	Mid-Atlantic	Southwest	Northwest	Central	Northeast	Midwest
Academic Performance of Students from Low Income Families	64	65	63	50		61	54
Academic Achievement of Limited English Speaking Pupils	51						
Academic Performance in Science	53						
Students' Thinking and Reasoning Skills	65	63	64		49	58	54
Development of Students' Self-Esteem and Aspirations		49					
System to Recognize and Reward Outstanding Teachers					47	56	

In comparison, at least 50 percent of the respondents from regions other than the Southeast and Appalachia identify 7 items or issues that need little or no improvement.

ISSUES THAT NEED LITTLE OR NO IMPROVEMENT IN OTHER REGIONS

Issue	Percentage of Respondents						
	Midwest	Central	Northwest	Southwest	Northeast	Mid-Atlantic	West
Students' Behavior in School	48	53	54				
Students' Attendance Patterns	52	55	59				
Availability of Quality Instructional Materials	60	65	64	58	60	60	
School/Classroom Atmosphere or Climate	56	59	58	55			41
Size and/or Turnover of the Teaching/ Administrative Staff	62	67	60	59	57	60	55
Use of School Time for Instruction and Student Learning		50		53	38		50
Adequacy of Facilities	49	55	55	50	43	43	36

RESPONDENT ANALYSIS

The Closer The Respondents Are To Students, The Greater The Concern About Improvements

Four groups concerned with rural, small schools were asked their opinions about how much improvement was needed on 40 different issues. The four groups were school board presidents, district superintendents, building principals, and classroom teachers.

Averaging their responses to all 40 issues, 31 percent of the total respondents say there is a strong need to improve rural, small schools. But nearly as many respondents say just the opposite.

This balance suggests that about as many respondents would leave the schools alone as would improve them. But that depends on who you talk to.

Fact is, the school board presidents --the people in a lead position to make changes in rural, small schools-- are by and large satisfied with the status quo. A full 35 percent of all school board presidents would leave things as they are. That compares to only 26 percent of their number who think serious improvements are required.

Superintendents, to a lesser extent, share this "hands-off" attitude. Twenty-eight percent say things should be left alone; and 30 percent want improvements made.

Principals and teachers, those closest to the students, are more inclined to cite a need for improvements in rural, small schools. Across the country 30 percent of the principals and 34 percent of the teachers think major improvements are required. Nevertheless, a lot of the same respondents line up along side the school board presidents and superintendents. Twenty-nine percent of the principals and teachers see little or no need for improvements.

BASELINE RESPONSES, BY ROLE GROUP AND REGION ACROSS 40 ITEMS IN SURVEY

	EXTENT OF IMPROVEMENT NEEDED	
	Percent Marking None or Little	Percent Marking Strong or Great
All Respondents	30	31
Board Presidents	35	26
Superintendents	28	30
Principals	29	30
Teachers	29	34
Appalachia	23	37
Central	36	24
Mid-Atlantic	32	28
Midwest	34	26
Northeast	30	30
Northwest	37	26
Southeast	22	40
Southwest	32	30
West	27	34

Obviously, there's a lot that's good about rural, small schools. But it depends on where you live, as we saw in the previous section. And it depends on *your job. Are you the one who has to ask the* community for the tax increase that will fund the improvements? If so, you're less apt to seek them. Are you one of those who has to enter the school and confront the children? If so, you want major improvements and you want them now.

Of the four groups surveyed, school board presidents were less apt to respond. That's not unexpected. Altogether only 35 percent (827) filled out the survey and mailed it back. School board presidents, of course, are educational laypersons and consequently are busy with other things. Besides, the survey was mailed to the school district's central office, thus complicating the delivery to the board member.

Almost two thirds of the school board presidents who did respond express little or no concern regarding staff size and turnover, student attendance, or the availability of quality instructional materials. More than half also express little or no concern about school or classroom climate, student performance in health and physical education, or the adequacy of facilities.

Nevertheless, the school board presidents do have some worries. Half of them express strong concern about students' thinking and reasoning skills. Many of these board members also think something should be done to improve the students' self-esteem and aspirations.

Overall, these elected school leaders think half of the items on the survey need some attention; a third, little or no attention; and only a handful require immediate attention.

The largest response to the survey came from district superintendents. That's probably because there's only one gatekeeper between them and the mail deliver. Altogether, 1,451 or 62 percent of the superintendents responded. Nearly all are employed in a unified, K-12 district.

More than half of the superintendents don't think the size and/or the turnover of teachers is anything to fret about. Nearly as many are unconcerned about the quality of their district's instructional materials, school or classroom climate, and the behavior of their students.

But the superintendents have a list of concerns. Well over half of these chief administrators worry about the students' thinking and reasoning skills and the academic performance of their low-income students. Nearly half of the superintendents think they need to improve the way they reward and recognize outstanding teachers. As many worry about promoting students' self-esteem and aspirations and improving their vocational and career preparation.

In tune with their board presidents, the district superintendents select few issues that they believe really need attention. Overall, they're highly concerned only about the issues mentioned above and not at all bothered by about an equal number of issues. The rest of the issues generate only moderate concern.

A little over half of all the principals surveyed responded (1,283 principals for a 55 percent return).

More than any other group, principals agree on the need to make improvements in the academic performance of pupils from low-income families and all students' performance in thinking and reasoning skills. About 65 percent of the principals cite these two issues as greatly needing improvement. More than half of the principals think there is little

or no need to address the issue of staff size and turnover or the quality of instructional materials. On the other hand, nearly as many principals say something should be done to recognize and reward those outstanding teachers.

Generally speaking, principals --in larger numbers than the other three audiences surveyed-- express little or no concern about student attendance or their behavior while in school. Principals, when they choose to worry, think about how they might develop students' self esteem, aspirations, and academic skills.

Thinking along the same lines as the principals, the 1,073 teachers who responded to the survey (46 percent) agree that something should be done to improve the academic performance of children from poor families. And these teachers, at least two-thirds of them, want to see the students improve their thinking and reasoning skills.

Not surprising, 54 percent say they want to see improvements in the way outstanding teachers are recognized and rewarded. But nearly as many (51 percent) express little or no concern about the size or turnover of the teaching force in their schools.

The teachers seem satisfied with their school and classroom climate, the time they have for instruction, and the availability of quality instructional materials.

Nevertheless, nearly half the teachers still say they think improvements are needed in students' mastery of the basic skills, particularly reading comprehension and science. Teachers would also like to see parents more involved in their children's education.

Nearly as many teachers are concerned about the levels of expectations for students' academic development, about their vocational and career preparation, and -closely related-- their self esteem and future aspirations.

Teachers, more than any other group of respondents, seem to be concerned about what it takes to prepare students in rural, small schools for the life that awaits them after graduation.

SUMMARY

Laboratories Have Opportunity To Build on Excellence in Nation's Rural, Small Schools

Taken altogether, our school board presidents, district superintendents, building principals, and classroom teachers agree on only four things:

- The importance of improving the academic performance of students from low-income families;
- The need to improve students' thinking and reasoning skills;
- The task of recognizing and rewarding outstanding teachers; and
- The development of students' self-esteem and aspirations.

The concurrence on these four issues remains constant among the four groups, across all nine regions of the country, and within all 50 states.

Beyond these four issues, though, there isn't any real concensus about what needs to be improved in rural, small schools. Differences exist within and among the four groups, within and among the nine regions, and probably within all 50 states.

Some concensus does exist, however, about which problems are least pressing. These are: (a) availability of quality instructional materials; (b) school/classroom atmosphere or climate; and (c) size and/or turnover of teachers and administrators.

Regional differences stand out. In particular, the Southern states recognize they have a need to make serious improvements in their rural, small schools. By contrast, only 25 percent of the Northwest Region respondents think their problems are relatively important.

A regional analysis, though, can be misleading. Even in regions that register scant concern for many of the 40 issues presented, there exist pockets of schools and districts that desperately need to improve their programs.

We know from some data analysis conducted by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, for example, that poverty plagues many really small districts scattered across America.

Consider this statistic: In 14 percent of the 11,850 "small" districts (with enrollments under 2,500 students), at least 20 percent of their students are from families living in poverty. In other words, 1,654 school districts have one fifth of their students from low-income families.

The equation changes some when we look simply at "rural" districts (e.g., a district that has at least 75 percent of its students from rural areas). Today 59 percent of all the school districts in the country are classified "rural." They enroll 7.7 million children. That's 16 percent of the nation's total.

In these "rural" districts, 22 percent (2,136 districts) have at least 20 percent or more of their students coming to school from families living in poverty.

When we count "rural" and "small" together --a district that's both small and rural, in other words-- we find 8,889 such districts. That's about 56 percent of all the school districts in the country. Together they enroll nearly 4.8 million students.

The survey reveals much that's good about rural, small schools. But it also spotlights many concerns.

Equipped with these data, the regional laboratories will be able to build on the excellence that undergirds rural, small schools and to concentrate on those regional priorities that beg for attention.

APPENDIX CONTENTS

Regional Educational Laboratories

National Rural, Small Schools Task Force Members

Additional Data Charts

Regional Educational Laboratories

APPALACHIA

Appalachia Educational Laboratory
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CENTRAL

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MID-ATLANTIC

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MIDWEST

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Portland, Oregon 97204
(503) 275-9500
Robert R. Rath, executive director

States Served: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, Northern Mariana Islands, Trust Territory of Pacific

SOUTHEAST

Southeastern Educational Improvement Laboratory
P.O. Box 12746
Research Triangle Park, North Carolina 27709
(919) 549-8216
Charles J. Law, Jr., executive director

States Served: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina

SOUTHWEST

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 East Seventh Street
Austin, Texas 78701
(512) 476-6861
Preston C. Kronkosky, executive director

States Served: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas

WEST

Far West Laboratory
1855 Folsom Street
San Francisco, California 94103
(415) 565-3000
Dean Nafziger, executive director

States Served: Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah

National Rural, Small Schools Task Force

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Fort Myers, Florida

Robert Benton, *chair*
Dean, College of Education
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Rural School Program
Cornell University

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Blue Mountain (Mississippi) College

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Datil (New Mexico) School Board

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Montana State University

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East Wenatchee, Washington

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Arkansas State Representative

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Ohio County (West Virginia) Schools

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Colusa (California) County Schools

Glen Shaw, executive director
Southwest/West Central (Minnesota)
Educational Services Cooperative

Honorable George Spaulding
Vermont State Senator

Robert H. Mattson, *staff director*
University of Oregon

	Board Presidents		Superintendents		Principals		Teachers		ALL	
	High	*Low*	*High*	*Low*	*High*	*Low*	*High*	*Low*	*High*	*Low*
Performance of elementary students	17	32	21	19	22	23	26	24	22	25
Performance of secondary students	32	18	39	11	37	13	43	15	38	14
Performance of low-income students	55	13	64	7	64	6	67	7	62	8
Performance of low English proficiency students	27	27	29	24	38	17	38	16	34	21
Performance of reading comprehension	33	24	36	18	37	20	47	13	38	19
Performance in language arts	31	23	34	17	34	17	40	16	35	18
Performance in mathematics	32	26	39	17	36	20	39	20	37	21
Performance in foreign languages	32	25	34	25	35	20	40	16	35	21
Performance in science	32	24	39	17	40	16	44	16	39	18
Performance in social studies	20	29	27	21	29	21	34	20	28	22
Performance in fine/performing arts	32	30	36	27	33	27	40	24	35	26
Performance in health and physical education	17	49	18	40	25	32	24	40	21	40
Students' thinking/reasoning skills	50	14	63	7	63	7	58	8	61	9
Students' behavior in schools	12	54	13	47	22	39	32	26	21	42
Vocational/career prep received by students	28	26	33	23	35	21	42	21	35	22
Development-students' self-esteem/aspirations	37	26	45	17	47	16	41	24	43	20
Students' attendance patterns	13	57	17	45	21	41	23	43	19	46
Availability of teachers for selected subjects	24	39	29	33	26	38	24	40	26	37
Availability of student support service	29	38	30	33	40	27	38	33	36	33
Availablity of quality instructional materials	13	58	13	55	15	56	23	45	16	54
Availability of teaching/learning facilities	19	49	25	39	25	41	31	39	26	43
Community support for quality education	28	37	33	31	36	31	45	26	36	32
Availability of variety in courses offered	22	37	25	34	22	40	33	33	25	36
Support and resources for effective teaching	21	38	26	29	26	34	31	32	26	33
Alternative delivery systems for instruction	27	30	34	22	32	26	28	30	31	27
Alignment of instruct. materials and asessment	19	37	26	30	22	32	17	38	21	34
Coord. of instruct. programs w/student services	16	39	16	35	18	36	20	33	18	36
Coord. between school programs & external agencies	20	38	23	32	25	32	30	28	25	32
Extent of community and parent involvement	31	34	35	26	35	27	45	24	35	27
Expectation for student academic development	29	30	40	22	33	28	42	25	12	27
Quality of instructional methods used in classroom	19	38	22	28	17	34	13	44	24	36
Quality of systems for assessing student learning	23	35	32	26	25	28	21	39	25	32
Quality of inservice programs for school staff	30	36	33	31	35	30	40	32	35	31
School/classroom atmosphere	10	53	11	47	10	50	17	49	12	50
System to reward outstanding students	23	45	24	39	20	42	30	41	24	42
System to reward outstanding teachers	35	19	44	18	47	20	54	19	47	20
Size/turnover of teaching/administrative staff	10	59	13	56	11	61	21	51	14	58
Use of time for instruction/student learning	18	50	21	40	17	47	20	50	19	47
Use of evaluation/research info for planning	30	28	36	22	33	22	26	34	31	24
Widespread understanding of instructional goals	28	31	33	23	30	30	21	40	28	31
AVERAGE PERCENTAGES	26	35	30	28	30	29	34	29	30	30

PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS EXPRESSING HIGH AND LOW CONCERNS
BY ROLE GROUP AND SURVEY ITEM

	Appal.	West	Central	Mid-west	North-east	North-west	Mid-Atlantic	South-west	South-east	Average
Performance of elementary students	13	16	40	33	24	37	25	22	14	24.99
Performance of secondary students	9	7	25	19	14	19	14	11	5	13.61
Performance of low-income students	3	6	15	10	6	14	10	7	3	7.99
Performance of low English proficiency students	18	11	28	29	21	19	22	17	17	20.67
Performance of reading comprehension	7	19	27	23	24	32	19	12	6	18.98
Performance in language arts	12	17	26	23	19	26	21	13	8	18.24
Performance in mathematics	11	18	30	26	27	29	23	15	8	20.79
Performance in foreign languages	15	13	23	29	28	19	29	20	13	20.67
Performance in science	10	15	26	22	24	24	18	15	7	17.9
Performance in social studies	11	20	32	27	23	33	26	17	9	22.11
Performance in fine/performing arts	19	21	33	32	27	28	35	29	15	26.33
Performance in health and physical education	30	38	49	43	39	48	40	44	28	39.9
Students' thinking/reasoning skills	4	8	13	10	7	19	10	7	3	8.87
Students' behavior in schools	32	45	53	48	41	54	42	39	26	42.1
Vocational/career prep received by students	18	16	29	29	21	22	24	27	17	22.48
Development-students' self-esteem/aspirations	11	20	24	21	19	31	23	21	13	20.24
Students' attendance patterns	28	42	55	52	51	59	53	45	31	46.12
Availability of teachers for selected subjects	29	34	47	43	36	40	36	38	28	36.57
Availability of student support service	21	25	43	36	35	38	36	38	26	33.08
Availablity of quality instructional materials	41	48	65	59	60	64	60	58	34	54.27
Availability of teaching/learning facilities	32	36	55	49	43	55	43	50	28	43.31
Community support for quality education	19	34	42	35	30	41	32	37	21	32.26
Availability of variety in courses offered	30	28	37	39	40	40	46	37	29	36.11
Support and resources for effective teaching	22	30	39	35	37	39	37	36	25	33.09
Alternative delivery systems for instruction	21	23	33	30	25	32	29	32	18	26.72
Alignment of instruct. materials and asessment	28	23	40	35	27	41	43	42	29	34.2
Coord. of instruct. programs w/student services	28	32	45	42	31	42	36	44	27	36.42
Coord. between school programs & external agencies	28	31	38	37	26	38	28	39	25	32.3
Extent of community and parent involvement	19	31	34	32	18	40	24	31	16	27.26
Expectation for student academic development	18	29	36	29	26	38	25	25	18	26.93
Quality of instructional methods used in classroom	29	31	41	38	34	49	33	38	29	35.7
Quality of systems for assessing student learning	30	27	35	30	35	37	29	35	29	31.82
Quality of inservice programs for school staff	31	30	30	29	32	34	22	33	35	30.79
School/classroom atmosphere	41	53	59	56	48	58	45	55	37	50.12
System to reward outstanding students	32	47	43	43	41	50	48	40	34	41.77
System to reward outstanding teachers	20	24	19	18	14	25	22	20	19	20.12
Size/turnover of teaching/administrative staff	55	48	67	62	57	60	60	60	49	57.58
Use of time for instruction/student learning	50	49	50	48	39	47	43	53	43	46.78
Use of evaluation/research info for planning	25	19	28	24	19	33	32	32	27	23.5
Widespread understanding of instructional goals	29	24	33	25	25	37	42	34	32	31.24

PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS BY REGION EXPRESSING LOW CONCERN FOR ITEMS

	Appal.	West	Central	Mid-west	North-east	North-west	Mid-Atlantic	South-west	South-east	Average
Performance of elementary students	35	28	9	14	15	15	18	26	39	22.12
Performance of secondary students	51	41	22	29	33	29	33	43	57	37.67
Performance of low-income students	75	64	46	54	61	50	65	63	80	61.99
Performance of low English proficiency students	28	51	24	26	22	31	29	45	46	33.53
Performance of reading comprehension	54	42	27	28	31	26	33	45	58	38.2
Performance in language arts	46	41	23	29	32	30	26	38	49	34.81
Performance in mathematics	45	43	24	27	26	29	35	43	58	36.64
Performance in foreign languages	45	37	38	33	25	33	21	40	46	35.28
Performance in science	53	45	27	34	32	32	31	40	56	38.87
Performance in social studies	42	25	19	22	25	23	23	34	44	28.46
Performance in fine/performing arts	49	39	25	31	34	34	26	35	46	35.22
Performance in health and physical education	29	24	14	18	22	19	19	18	31	21.49
Students' thinking/reasoning skills	73	65	49	54	58	47	63	64	78	60.96
Students' behavior in schools	32	23	14	18	19	16	16	23	34	21.42
Vocational/career prep received by students	41	45	30	30	32	34	31	28	45	35.07
Development-students' self-esteem/aspirations	50	44	35	38	40	36	49	40	54	42.68
Students' attendance patterns	32	23	12	14	13	14	11	21	30	18.81
Availability of teachers for selected subjects	33	29	22	20	30	23	22	26	32	26.23
Availability of student support service	46	44	27	30	32	31	39	30	41	35.5
Availablity of quality instructional materials	24	19	9	11	11	14	12	15	29	15.96
Availability of teaching/learning facilities	36	30	16	21	30	21	19	18	40	25.6
Community support for quality education	51	34	26	31	34	31	40	31	45	35.87
Availability of variety in courses offered	33	27	19	24	24	26	22	25	29	25.48
Support and resources for effective teaching	33	31	20	22	28	24	24	24	30	26.22
Alternative delivery systems for instruction	35	42	25	26	36	28	26	26	36	31.06
Alignment of instruct. materials and assessment	22	28	18	22	29	18	15	17	25	21.49
Coord. of instruct. programs w/student services	17	21	13	14	19	15	19	14	25	17.26
Coord. between school programs & external agencies	25	26	21	21	31	20	26	20	33	34.86
Extent of community and parent involvement	45	36	29	31	41	25	42	34	48	36.63
Expectation for student academic development	43	44	26	30	38	28	39	36	44	36.22
Quality of instructional methods used in classroom	22	18	15	17	17	12	17	18	24	17.73
Quality of systems for assessing student learning	28	33	22	26	25	23	23	20	28	25.22
Quality of inservice programs for school staff	36	33	37	36	36	36	41	28	29	34.53
School/classroom atmosphere	14	14	9	12	12	9	8	13	20	12.22
System to reward outstanding students	25	26	24	21	23	19	20	25	33	23.91
System to reward outstanding teachers	50	36	47	46	56	46	44	45	51	46.81
Size/turnover of teaching/administrative staff	15	17	10	11	15	14	15	14	16	14.16
Use of time for instruction/student learning	19	22	15	18	25	18	19	16	21	19.03
Use of evaluation/research info for planning	34	34	28	28	40	26	31	25	32	30.86
Widespread understanding of instructional goals	25	32	28	29	36	23	24	25	29	27.94

PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS BY REGION EXPRESSING HIGH CONCERN FOR ITEMS

CEDaR

The Council for Educational Development and Research (CEDaR) is a national, nonprofit education association. Its purpose is to encourage educational inquiry and to disseminate its outcomes. The association's membership consists of regional educational laboratories and university-based national research centers.

These institutions are supported in part by the U.S. Department of Education. They constitute the largest segment of the Department's investment in educational research and development.

The Council is headquartered in Washington, D.C. Edward McDill, professor of sociology and co-director, Center for the Research on Elementary and Middle Schools, Johns Hopkins University, chairs CEDaR's Board of Trustees. The executive director is E. Joseph Schneider.

CEDaR

Council for Educational Development and Research
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